



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2024

by **B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/23/3332040

46 Berry Croft, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1JN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr. E Lloyd against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref is P23/V0788/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the subdivision of existing dwelling to create additional dwelling and associated infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is sited within a wider residential area, characterised by terraced and semi-detached properties of a similar scale, set within plots of a similar size. Whilst a number of dwellings have been visibly extended, such as the appeal property¹, the good sized gardens and generally consistent dwelling frontages provide a sense of spaciousness. The general regularity in scale contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. Whilst the side extension to the appeal property already exists, I observed that the two front doors already in place visibly and incongruously indicate the site could be split into two separate dwellings. A separate front door in close visible proximity to the first would not normally be required for any other reason, and it would be reasonable for passers-by to assume that this was the case. This would also be evident to the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings, even with an oblique angled view, through the subdivision of the rear garden area. Whilst part of the proposed development such as the rear fencing may be permitted development, its independent use, through separate garden furniture for example, would be clear to neighbours.
5. The narrower dwelling unit would appear comparatively cramped and at odds with the general consistent larger dwelling size in the surrounding area, and the proposed plot would be significantly smaller in width than any of the

¹ Including planning permission reference P19/V0930/HH – two storey side extension

neighbouring dwellings. This would erode the area's sense of spaciousness and regularity of scale.

6. The applicant points to a number of examples of nearby side extensions, including one with a side door, however, notwithstanding that these do not appear to be creating new dwellings, little detail is provided of these dwellings which prevents direct comparison. The photograph of No 8 Lark Hill does appear to illustrate a subdivision; however, the side extension is of a greater width than the appeal property, appearing to result in additional dwelling(s) that is/are less obviously narrow. In addition, this property appears to be a corner plot, which already restricts its garden size and limits its similarity to the context of the appeal site. As such, based on limited detail, I do not consider this example is directly comparable.
7. I conclude that the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the area. In that regard, the development conflicts with Policy 37 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (2016), and Policy 3 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 (2019), which, along with the advice set out in the Supplementary Planning Document South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide, seek to ensure that development, including the sub-division of dwellings, maintains or enhances the character and appear of the street scene and surroundings. These policies are in broad conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

8. The proposal would result in an additional unit of accommodation which would contribute to the Government's broader objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, in a location with good access to services and facilities, as supported by Framework. The proposal would result in a short-term economic benefits arising from the extension and internal construction process. Economic and social benefits are also likely to arise from the occupation of the new dwelling. The proposal would also deliver a unit which would come to the market place rapidly. However, even if the Office of National Statistics suggest that there increase in the number of people living alone, and there is a consequential increase in demand for starter/one bed homes, given the quantum of development in this case, I give this matter limited weight in favour of the scheme.
9. The lack of harm identified in relation to matters such as amenity space, drainage, highway safety or sustainable construction is to be expected in any development and does not weigh in favour of the proposal. The provision of CIL revenue would be modest and would mitigate, not benefit the surroundings. It is not demonstrated that any biodiversity enhancement on the site is dependent on the proposed development. As such, this benefit carries little weight in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

10. The identified harm means the proposal would not accord with the development plan policies when read as a whole. The benefits and other considerations are of insufficient weight to justify granting planning permission contrary to the development plan. As such, I conclude the appeal is dismissed.

B Phillips INSPECTOR